

Deerfield, IL - U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk (R-Highland Park) announced the results of negotiations with the U.S. Navy to reduce the number of military homes to be located in Glenview and Highwood/Highland Park. The arrangement opens up more land for local communities to preserve for open space or develop to boost funding for local schools and emergency services.

“This agreement will dramatically improve school funding and reduce the impact of federal housing on Glenview and Highwood/Highland Park schools. It will ensure that all students --- from civilian and military families – have the highest quality education possible,” said Congressman Kirk.

The 10th Congressional District is home to the 35,000 sailors of the Great Lakes Naval Training Center, the only boot camp of the U.S. Navy. Currently, many Navy families live in decaying homes totaling 2,014 in North Chicago, 400 in Glenview and 329 in Highland Park. Children of military families in the U.S. attend local schools. Because the homes are owned by the federal government, they cannot be taxed. The federal government helps local schools with some of the costs of education by making “Impact Aid” payments but such payments fall short of the actual costs of education.

Under a new public-private partnership, the U.S. military is contracting with developers to build new private homes on federal land that is leased to military families. Following major upgrades in Honolulu and San Diego, the U.S. Navy announced plans to upgrade homes for families at Great Lakes to be built by Cleveland-based developer -- Forest City, Inc. Under such an arrangement, the new home structures can be taxed by local authorities, generating additional funding for local schools, police and fire departments. Military families benefit by living in new homes.

Originally, the Navy announced plans to increase the number of homes in Glenview from 400 to 416, giving no federal land to Glenview for additional open space or civilian development. Local leaders led by Glenview’s Mayor, Kerry Cummings, expressed strong concerns to Congressman Kirk that this would burden local schools. Under an arrangement agreed to by the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Wayne Arny, the Navy reduced its plan from a total of 416 homes at Glenview by 166 to 250. The reduction will also free up 38 acres for Glenview leaders to use for open space and civilian development. In sum, the public-private partnership is estimated to generate \$758,000 in new annual tax revenue for Glenview above the current earnings from the property.

The Navy's original plans also called for adding one additional home in Ft. Sheridan (Highwood/Highland Park) to 330 homes, disappointing local officials who hoped for a reduction in military housing at the fort. But the new agreement will reduce the number of homes at Ft. Sheridan by 45, from a planned 330 to 284, with 45 acres available for open space and civilian development. The arrangement also reaffirmed the Navy's commitment to transfer title of Ft. Sheridan's Lake Michigan bluffs to an environmental trust. In sum, the public-private partnership is estimated to generate \$1 million in new annual tax revenue for Highwood/Highland Park above the current earnings from the property.

In North Chicago, the Navy plans to reduce the number of homes from 2,014 to 966. With just 966 homes, the local school district would be closer to the cut off point for qualifying as a "heavily impacted" school district, thereby eligible for additional federal impact aid. Congressman Kirk and Navy officials are working on a revised plan to increase the number of homes in North Chicago to ensure the flow of Impact Aid. The final number of homes to be built in North Chicago will be announced in September.

"I will continue to work closely with the mayors of each community on these plans. Our work will result in more funding for schools, more open space, better homes for military families and more civilian tax revenue for police/fire departments," said Congressman Kirk.

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